

IN THE CLAIMS

These amendments are based upon the international application as amended under Article 19 -- see Amended Sheets attached to the International Preliminary Examination Report (IPER).

The claims have been amended as follows:

1 – 17 (canceled)

18. (new) A distributor device for use in an aluminium casting operation to direct the flow of molten aluminium into a mould, the distributor device comprising: a rigid, substantially bowl-shaped receptacle (2) of a refractory material having a base member (4) and a peripheral wall (6) that extends upwards from the base member, said receptacle having an inlet opening (8) towards an upper end thereof and at least one outlet opening (14) towards the base member, the device being constructed and arranged such that, in use, molten aluminium poured into the distributor device through the inlet opening (8) is redirected by the distributor device and flows outwards into the mould through said at least one outlet opening (14), wherein the upper surface of the base member (4) is inclined downwards towards the at least one outlet opening (14).

19. (new) A distributor device according to **claim 18**, wherein said at least one outlet opening (14) is provided in the peripheral wall (6), the device being constructed and arranged such that in use, molten aluminium flows substantially horizontally outwards through said at least one outlet opening (14).

20. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 19**, wherein said at least one outlet opening (14) is provided in the lower part of the peripheral wall (6), adjacent the base member (4).

21. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 18**, wherein the peripheral wall (6) includes two side wall members (10) and two end wall members (12) and said at least one outlet opening (14) is provided by first and second outlet openings (14) in said end wall members (12).

22. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 21**, wherein the separation of the side wall members (10) increases towards ends of the side wall members.
23. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 21**, wherein the side wall members (10) are curved.
24. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 18**, wherein the base member (4) includes a raised flow deflector (16).
25. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 18**, wherein the peripheral wall (6) is inclined outwards.
26. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 18**, including a heating element for pre-heating the device.
27. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 18**, including a support structure (24,26).
28. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 18**, including a porous element (38) constructed and arranged such that, in use, molten aluminium poured into the distributor device flows through said porous element.
29. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 28**, in which the porous element (38) includes a substantially bowl-shaped mesh of woven material that fits into and is supported by said receptacle (2), the arrangement being such that molten aluminium poured into the distributor device through the inlet opening (8) flows through the mesh of woven material before exiting through said at least one outlet opening (14).
30. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 29**, wherein the porous element (38) includes a mesh of coated glass fibres.

31. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 29**, wherein the porous element (38) includes a support frame (45) that, in use, engages and is supported by the receptacle (2).

32. (new) An aluminium casting installation including a mould (20), a delivery device (28,30) for delivering molten aluminium into the mould and a distributor device (2) according to **claim 18**, the distributor device (2) being mounted below the delivery device (28,30) and above the mould (20), the installation being constructed and arranged such that, in use, molten aluminium is poured from the delivery device into the mould through the distributor device.

33. (new) The aluminium casting installation according to **claim 32**, wherein the distributor device (2) is positioned so that, during pouring, it is partially immersed in the liquid metal in the mould (20) with said at least one outlet opening (14) below the surface (22) of the liquid metal.

34. (new) A distributor device for use in an aluminium casting operation to direct the flow of molten aluminium into a mould, the distributor device comprising: a rigid, substantially bowl-shaped receptacle (2) of a refractory material having a base member (4) and a peripheral wall (6) that extends upwards from the base member and includes two side wall members (10) and two end wall members (12), said receptacle having an inlet opening (8) towards an upper end thereof and at least one outlet opening (14) in each of said end wall members (12) towards the base member (4), the device being constructed and arranged such that, in use, molten aluminium poured into the distributor device through the inlet opening (8) is redirected by the distributor device and flows outwards into the mould through said outlet openings (14), wherein the separation of the side wall members (10) increases towards ends of the side wall members.

35. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 34**, wherein the base member (4) includes a raised flow deflector (16).

36. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 34**, wherein the upper surface of the base member (4) is inclined downwards towards the at least one outlet opening (14).

37. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 34**, further comprising a porous element (38) having a substantially bowl-shaped mesh of woven material that fits into and is supported by said receptacle (2), the arrangement being such that molten aluminium poured into the distributor device through the inlet opening (8) flows through the mesh of woven material before exiting through said at least one outlet opening (14).

38. (new) The distributor device for use in an aluminium casting operation to direct the flow of molten aluminium into a mould, the distributor device comprising: a rigid, substantially bowl-shaped receptacle (2) of a refractory material having a base member (4) and a peripheral wall (6) that extends upwards from the base member, said receptacle having an inlet opening (8) towards an upper end thereof and at least one outlet opening (14) towards the base member, the device being constructed and arranged such that, in use, molten aluminium poured into the distributor device through the inlet opening (8) is redirected by the distributor device and flows outwards into the mould through said at least one outlet opening (14), wherein the base member (4) includes a raised flow deflector (16).

39. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 38**, wherein the peripheral wall includes two side wall members (10) and two end wall members (12) and said at least one outlet opening (14) is provided in each of said end wall members (12), wherein the separation of the side wall members (10) increases towards ends of the side wall members.

40. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 38**, wherein the upper surface of the base member (4) is inclined downwards towards the at least one outlet opening (14).

41. (new) The distributor device according to **claim 38**, further comprising a porous element (38) having a substantially bowl-shaped mesh of woven material that fits into and is supported by said receptacle (2), the arrangement being such that molten aluminium poured into the distributor device through the inlet opening (8) flows through the mesh of woven material before exiting through said at least one outlet opening (14).